

## 2019\_09\_01\_am2\_Shamatha\_LMC.mp4

### *Carrying Practice: daily non-conceptual practice with now*

[00:05:46] Since it is true that so many of us have deep roots in conceptual understandings. And, of course, many wonderful things have been done through those understandings. But also, since... those things, which are utterly... useless from a conceptual perspective, we have... in many cases, maybe most of us even, not... put much effort into the non-conceptual. One good measuring stick for... the practice of shamatha... and I only say that because today we're doing shamatha, but... we should be doing it every moment of every day. In the realm of the *necessity* of conceptual understanding, we *do* understand that, for example, in technology and learning languages and so many things like that... we have to remember where we were yesterday. And kind of calculate where we are today and sometimes that happens and of necessity, moment to moment.

[00:08:06] Recalling the instructions, for example, for meditation yesterday or what will happen in the future ten minutes from now... our best conceptual understanding, in the context of what we're doing now, will not only be *not* useful, it will be a hindrance .... What is important in the practice of shamatha, and I like to say more, that it's really about *all* of our meditation practices... that when we sit down with the intention of... exploring the nature of our experiences... *placing* our awareness on... experiences like, for example, awareness on awareness itself. If you practiced yesterday, all day long, placing your awareness... on your awareness and the experience as it unfolded. Having done that yesterday... will be of almost no use today.

[00:09:54] Unlike our culture of technology, where we need to remember things... we need to remember them conceptually. At least, we need to remember how the pieces fit together and where they go. Like language... to put the verbs and the nouns and the adjectives in the right place... so that we can communicate. ... But in our *meditation*, we want to do something radically different. We want to witness our experiences as they unfold. And not yet named... like that was pleasant or unpleasant.

[00:11:04] This is the *primary* difference... in our work in the conceptual realm and our work in the realm of going deeper in our understanding... in ordinary terms of answering the question of who we are and what we are.

[00:11:45] So as we rest our awareness here, the *most* effective... some will say the *only* effective approach is to rest... our awareness... on the *entirety* of our experiences as they are unfolding. Which doesn't mean that we count them. That we notice their color or that we notice that they're friendly or unfriendly, pleasant or unpleasant. The idea is not to try to find... the *best* experience and reproduce it. But just to stay with whatever arises. ... And if you find yourself criticizing yourself, then... have that experience. If you find yourself *angry* in a kind of ugly way... have that experience. Don't turn away from anything. Bring your awareness back... in *any* moment where you realize you have... stepped *outside* of that awareness. The objective is *not*... to become peaceful. [laughs] Most of us could breathe a sigh of relief. It just is not the objective. The objective is... to become... as intimate as we possibly can... with our own minds. And in time, we will discover the *nature* of that mind, but not until we have discarded the name.

[00:14:23] We love names. Concepts. And they are not without great use. We're so good at those things, but when we are talking about... the nature of our mind and the nature of the experiences which flow *continuously* from that mind... even if we *could* name it, we would not be able to keep up. But it actually is not to the point. The point is to make the discoveries... that bring us to the place of recognizing the nature... of that awakened mind. Which we are all thoroughly endowed with. So not to build a castle, not to build a case for our great meditation. Or a case for our deep understanding of the Dharma. Or anything else. We're just *listening*... to the continuous flow of our experiences.

[00:15:55] And that means... unlike when we are engaged in learning something conceptual, we have to remember so many things. You're learning a new language you have to remember so many things. And in the realm of technology, the same kinds of things. But here, *every* time we sit down... and rest our awareness for a moment... we know we are starting over. We are not continuing from where we were before. That is yesterday's knowledge. And we don't want to turn the nature of mind into an element of knowledge. We want the direct experience, and we want it *all* the time. Not just an occasional insight. Don't cheat yourself. This is not as difficult as it sounds.

[00:17:16] The only difference is... we are not trying to understand... the experience we're having in this moment through the *lens* of the experience we had yesterday. That's a little difficult. Because that's normally how we operate. But it is not difficult if you are having a pleasant experience and I poke you with a sharp pin. And after you've poked me in the eye, the issue is... for *both* of us, what's the experience that we just had? Without a name or anything. Can I just see it... fading into the distance? And waiting for the next one, which is usually *already there* by the time we began waiting. This is the way we become intimate with our own nature, our own experiences and who we really are and what we really are.

[00:18:31] So... it is, by the way, okay... to be highly entertained [laughs] by the experiences that flow out of our minds endlessly. If you are *not* entertained, there is something fundamentally amiss. But it's also okay to be really serious. And *unlike* many situations, it's also okay to be really angry. As long as you bring your awareness to the flow of *that* experience, there's nothing that can harm you from that anger. It's when we fall off the horse and think we're still on it, that we get into trouble. So let's try again for a bit. ... Let's begin with the recitation of refuge so that we try to remind ourselves to see the experience of refuge, not to remember what refuge is about.

**sangha** [00:19:56] reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer

**silence** [00:19:56] period of meditation

**sangha** [00:53:44] dedicating the merit